



DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

April 27, 2026

**Water Quality Division
Montana Department of Environmental Quality**

PROJECT/SITE NAME: Weyerhaeuser Kalispell Complex

PERMITTEE/APPLICANT/COMPANY NAME: Weyerhaeuser NR Company

PROPOSED PERMIT/LICENSE NUMBER: MTX000325

**LOCATION: NE Section 32 and 33, Township 29 North, Range 21 West
Latitude: 48.23068, Longitude: -114.28657**

COUNTY: Flathead County

PROPERTY OWNERSHIP: Private

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1 OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED ACTION

1.1 Authorizing Action

Under the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA), Montana agencies are required to prepare an environmental review for state actions that may have an impact on the Montana environment. The Proposed Action is considered to be a state action that may have an impact on the Montana environment and, therefore, the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) must prepare an environmental review. This EA will examine the proposed action and alternatives to the proposed action and disclose potential and proximate impacts that may result from the proposed and alternative actions. DEQ will determine the need for additional environmental review based on consideration of the criteria set forth in Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) 17.4.608.

1.2 Description of DEQ Regulatory Oversight

DEQ administers the Montana Water Quality Act, issuing Montana Ground Water Pollutant Control System (MGWPCS) discharge permits pursuant to Title 75, Chapter 5, part 4, Montana Code Annotated (MCA). Regulations governing MGWPCS permitting are codified at Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) Title 17, Chapter 30, Sub-chapter 10.

1.3 Proposed Action

The Weyerhaeuser NR Company has applied for a new MGWPCS permit for the existing Kalispell Complex facility under the Montana Water Quality Act to discharge industrial wastewater to ground water. The facility is located on private land, near Kalispell, Montana. All information included in this EA is derived from the permit application, discussions with the Applicant, analysis of aerial photography, topographic maps, and other research tools. See the Fact Sheet (DEQ, 2026) for more information.

Table 1. Summary of Proposed Action

General Overview	<p>The proposed action is to issue an individual MGWPCS permit, for an existing facility, that contains special conditions, best management practices, wastewater monitoring and reporting, and ground water monitoring and reporting requirements. The permit is issued under the authority of the Montana Water Quality Act.</p> <p>This permitting action is to regulate the discharge of pollutants to ground water by monitoring wastewater and ground water quality for the five-year permit duration. See the Permit for the legally binding requirements and the Fact Sheet for the technical rationale behind permitting decisions.</p>
Personnel Onsite	Operation: A part-time contractor/operator for wastewater and ground water sampling.
Location and Analysis Area	Location: 75 Sunset Dr., Kalispell Analysis Area: The area being analyzed as part of this environmental review includes the immediate facility area (Figure 1), as well as neighboring lands surrounding the analysis area, as reasonably appropriate for the impacts being considered.

Table 2. The Applicant is required to comply with all applicable local, county, state, and federal requirements pertaining to the following resource areas.

Air Quality	No air quality regulations apply for issuance of the MGWPCS permit. The Applicant holds an existing Montana Air Quality Permit (#2602-14) last reissued on 01/21/2026.
Water Quality	The Applicant proposes to obtain a new MGWPCS permit coverage and comply with requirements for discharge to state waters.
Erosion Control and Sediment Transport	The existing erosion control and sediment transport system is maintained by the Applicant. The MGWPCS permit is part of their on-site storm water system by establishing authorization to discharge from their storm water ponds to ground water.
Solid Waste	No solid waste regulations apply for issuance of the MGWPCS permit.
Cultural Resources	Accessed Montana Cultural Resource Database on 04/13/2026. A generalized search shows that historical sites may be present in or near the facility. Weyerhaeuser does not plan on expanding their current surface disturbance footprint. The MGWPCS permitting action will not affect cultural resources as it does not authorize further disturbance.
Hazardous Substances	Hazardous waste disposal is not allowed under the MGWPCS permit. The permittee recently updated/developed a new Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasures Plan to prevent incidental exposure to Volatile Organic Compounds as discussed in Section 2 of the MGWPCS Fact Sheet document.

Table 3. Cumulative Impacts

Past Actions	Industrial activities at the facility started in the 1960's. The facility falls within the Evergreen Water and Sewer Districts where most buildings that generate wastewater are connected to the sewer rather than having an on-site septic and disposal system.
Present Actions	The permitting action will regulate the discharge of wastewater to Class I ground waters. All beneficial uses will be maintained as discussed in Section 3 of the MGWPCS Fact Sheet document. No impacts to surface waters are expected.
Related Future Actions	There are no other applications under consideration for the analysis area.

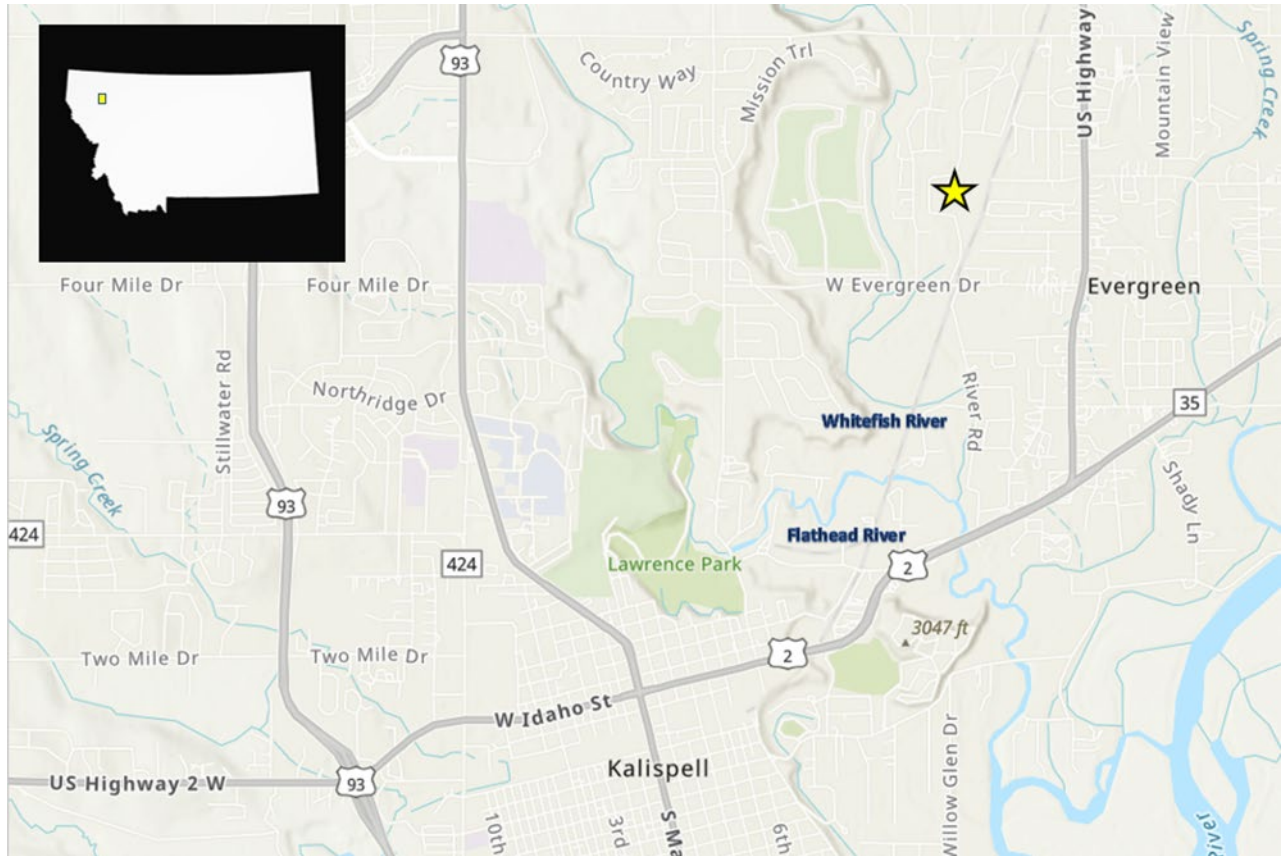
1.4 Purpose, Need, and Benefits

DEQ's purpose in conducting this environmental review is to act upon Weyerhaeuser NR Company application for a permit to discharge wastewater to ground water. DEQ's action on the permit application is governed by § 75-5-101, et seq., Montana Code Annotated (MCA) and the Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) Title 17, Chapter 30, Sub-chapters 2, 5, 7, and 10.

The Applicant's purpose and need, as expressed to DEQ in seeking this action, is to discharge wastewater

from five infiltration ponds into Class I ground water. Special conditions and monitoring provisions to ensure compliance with water quality standards, including the protection of beneficial uses, are included in the proposed MGWPCS permit.

Figure 1. General Location of the Facility



1.5 Other Governmental Agencies and Programs with Jurisdiction

The proposed action would be located on private land. All applicable local, state, and federal rules must be adhered to, which may also include other local, state, federal, or tribal agency jurisdiction. Other governmental agencies which may have overlapped, or additional jurisdiction include but may not be limited to: Montana Department of Natural Resources, Montana Department of Fish Wildlife and Parks, United States Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S Army Corps of Engineers, and Flathead County.

2 EVALUATION OF AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND IMPACT BY RESOURCE

The impact analysis will identify and evaluate the proximate direct and secondary impacts to the physical environment and population in the area to be affected by the proposed project. Direct impacts occur at the same time and place as the action that causes the impact. Secondary impacts are a further impact to Montana's environment that may be stimulated, induced by, or otherwise result from a direct impact of the action (ARM 17.4.603(18)). Where impacts would occur, the impacts will be described in this analysis. When the analysis discloses environmental impacts, these are proximate impacts pursuant to 75-1-201(1)(b)(iv)(A), MCA.

Cumulative impacts are the collective impacts on Montana's environment within the borders of Montana of the Proposed Action when considered in conjunction with other past and present actions related to the Proposed Action by location and generic type. Related future actions must also be considered when these actions are under concurrent consideration by any state agency through pre-impact statement studies, separate impact statement evaluation, or permit processing procedures. The projects identified in **Table 1** were analyzed as part of the cumulative impacts assessment for each resource.

As noted in **Table 1**, the scope of this analysis includes only those operational impacts that may reasonably be expected to occur during the five-year permit term.

The intensity of the impacts is measured using the following:

- **No impact:** There would be no change from current conditions.
- **Negligible:** An adverse or beneficial effect would occur but would be at the lowest levels of detection.
- **Minor:** The effect would be noticeable but would be relatively small and would not affect the function or integrity of the resource.
- **Moderate:** The effect would be easily identifiable and would change the function or integrity of the resource.
- **Major:** The effect would alter the resource.

2.1 Geology and Soil Quality, Stability and Moisture

This section includes the following resource areas, as required in ARM 17.4.609: Geology; Soil Quality, Stability, and Moisture

Are soils present which are fragile, erosive, susceptible to compaction, or unstable? Are there unusual or unstable geologic features? Are there special reclamation considerations?

Direct Impacts

No significant impacts were identified by DEQ after an in-depth review of the Application, Research, and other Government Agency References in development of the Tentative Determination documents for the current MGWPCS permit action (DEQ, 2026). All activities currently take place within the defined property boundaries of an existing industrial site. **No impact.**

Secondary Impacts

Secondary impacts are not expected with this permitting action after an in-depth review of the Application, Research, and other Government Agency References in development of the

Tentative Determination documents for the current MGWPCS permit action (DEQ, 2026). All activities currently take place within the defined property boundaries of an existing industrial site. **No impact.**

Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts are not expected with this permitting action after an in-depth review of the Application, Research, and other Government Agency References in development of the Tentative Determination documents for the current MGWPCS permit action (DEQ, 2026). All activities currently take place within the defined property boundaries of an existing industrial site. **No impact.**

2.2 Water Quality, Quantity, And Distribution

This section includes the following resource areas, as required in ARM 17.4.609: Water Quality, Quantity and Distribution

Are any surface or groundwater resources present in the analysis area? Is there potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels or degradation of water quality?

Direct Impacts

See the MGWPCS Fact Sheet (DEQ, 2026) for information regarding the receiving water classification, beneficial uses, water quality standards, nondegradation, ground water monitoring network, and special conditions.

In order to maintain beneficial uses of the aquifer, DEQ performed an analysis on the potential impacts that this project may have on the aquifer. The resulting projections indicate that water quality standards will be met downgradient of the drainfields and that all beneficial uses will be maintained.

The facility currently has an existing ground water monitoring network, last updated in 2023. The MGWPCS permit will maintain and use for ongoing monitoring of the condition of the aquifer. The permit will allow for all reported data to be available to the public. DEQ and the public will therefore be able to confirm that the direct impacts of this activity are as anticipated by this assessment.

The Whitefish River generally flows parallel with the Evergreen Aquifer. The portion of the aquifer that flows under the facility first parallels then may intersect with an eastern bend of the Whitefish River, 3,900 feet to the South of the facility (**Figure 1**). There is no evidence of a direct hydraulic connection between the discharge site and downgradient surface water. The shallow aquifer beneath the outfall site is likely indirectly hydrologically connected with the Whitefish River.

The Whitefish River is currently impaired due to oil and grease, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and temperature (DEQ, 2020). The existing facility is not expected to discharge oil and grease or PCBs. Upon the discharge of wastewater to the subsurface, the thermal capacity of the soils will mitigate any thermal transport to the river.

Storm water is actively managed on-site and within the facilities boundary. If in the future overland flows are determined to go off site then a Multi-Sector General Permit for Industrial Storm Water Discharges under the Montana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (MPDES) Program may be in order.

No significant impacts were identified by DEQ after an in-depth review of the Application, Research, and other Government Agency References in development of the Tentative Determination documents for the current MGWPCS permit action (DEQ, 2026). All activities currently take place within the defined property boundaries of an existing industrial site.
Minor impact.

Secondary Impacts

See the MGWPCS Fact Sheet (DEQ, 2026) for information regarding the receiving water classification, beneficial uses, water quality standards, nondegradation, ground water monitoring network, and special conditions.

The wastewater discharge authorized by this permitting action may elevate pollutant levels above previous ambient conditions. However, as long as the facility operates within the bounds of their MGWPCS permit, no pollution will occur per Montana's Nondegradation Policy (MCA 75-5-303, ARM 17.30 Subchapter 7).

The facility currently has an existing ground water monitoring network, last updated in 2023. The MGWPCS permit will maintain and use this network for ongoing monitoring of the condition of the aquifer. All reported data is available to the public. DEQ and the public will therefore be able to confirm that the direct impacts of this activity are as anticipated by this assessment.

See the Fact Sheet (DEQ, 2026) for information regarding the receiving water classification, beneficial uses, water quality standards, nondegradation, and water quality based wastewater limit development.

The Whitefish River generally flows parallel with the Evergreen Aquifer. The portion of the aquifer that flows under the facility first parallels then may intersect with an eastern bend of the Whitefish River, 3,900 feet to the South of the facility (**Figure 1**). There is no evidence of a direct hydraulic connection between the discharge site and downgradient surface water. The shallow aquifer beneath the outfall site is likely indirectly hydrologically connected with the Whitefish River.

The Whitefish River is currently impaired due to oil and grease, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and temperature (DEQ, 2020). The existing facility is not expected to discharge oil and grease or PCBs. Upon the discharge of wastewater to the subsurface, the thermal capacity of the soils will mitigate any thermal transport to the river.

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Secondary impacts are not expected with this permitting action after an in-depth review of the Application, Research, and other Government Agency References in development of the Tentative Determination documents for the current MGWPCS permit action (DEQ, 2026). All activities currently take place within the defined property boundaries of an existing industrial site. **Minor impact.**

Cumulative Impacts

See the MGWPCS Fact Sheet (DEQ, 2026) for information regarding the receiving water classification, beneficial uses, water quality standards, nondegradation, ground water monitoring network, and special conditions.

DEQ considered cumulative environmental impacts of the operation and maintenance of the facility and found no significant adverse effects on water quality, the human environment, and the physical environment. The DEQ analysis included the cumulative impact from other past and present actions.

All major discharge permitting actions, including the current action and any future actions, will include any substantive information derived from public input relating to potential impacts on the human environment and on water quality. All future actions related to this current action will be addressed by DEQ through additional discharge permitting process procedures. Any actions that are outside the purview of the discharge permit may not be addressed by DEQ until the next permitting action takes place.

To protect beneficial uses, there shall be no increase of a pollutant to a level that renders the waters harmful, detrimental, or injurious. Therefore, no wastewaters may be discharged such that the wastewater either alone or in combination with other wastes will violate or can reasonably be expected to violate any standard.

Testing of the aquifer was completed to determine the existing impacts of all upgradient discharge sources. The resulting ambient concentration levels were used to determine the assimilative capacity to ensure beneficial uses were met for these existing sources.

The facility currently has an existing ground water monitoring network, last updated in 2023. The MGWPCS permit will maintain and use for ongoing monitoring of the condition of the aquifer. All reported data is available to the public. DEQ and the public will therefore be able to confirm that the direct impacts of this activity are as anticipated by this assessment.

The Whitefish River generally flows parallel with the Evergreen Aquifer. The portion of the aquifer that flows under the facility first parallels then may intersect with an eastern bend of the Whitefish River, 3,900 feet to the South of the facility (**Figure 1**). There is no evidence of a direct hydraulic connection between the discharge site and downgradient surface water. The shallow aquifer beneath the outfall site is likely indirectly hydrologically connected with the Whitefish River.

The Whitefish River is currently impaired due to oil and grease, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and temperature (DEQ, 2020). The existing facility is not expected to discharge oil and grease and PCBs. Upon the discharge of wastewater to the subsurface, the thermal capacity of the soils will mitigate any thermal transport to the river.

Long-term wastewater and ground water monitoring and reporting, continual analysis, maintenance of permit conditions, and public notice and comment are a benefit to having a system that is covered under a MGWPCS permit. If the Applicant does not comply with the terms and conditions of the permit, DEQ has enforcement authority to ensure a return to compliance.

Cumulative impacts are not expected with this permitting action after an in-depth review of the Application, Research, and other Government Agency References in development of the Tentative Determination documents for the current MGWPCS permit action (DEQ, 2026). All activities currently take place within the defined property boundaries of an existing industrial site. **Minor impact.**

2.3 Air Quality

This section includes the following resource areas, as required in ARM 17.4.609: Air Quality

Direct Impacts

The Permittee has a Montana Air Quality Permit, #2602-14, last issued on 01/21/2026. The permit covers all existing sources of air contaminants at the facility.

No significant impacts were identified by DEQ after an in-depth review of the MGWPCS Application, Research, and other Government Agency References in development of the Tentative Determination documents for the current MGWPCS permit action (DEQ, 2026). All activities currently take place within the defined property boundaries of an existing industrial site. **No impact.**

Secondary Impacts

Secondary impacts are not expected with this permitting action after an in-depth review of the Application, Research, and other Government Agency References in development of the Tentative Determination documents for the current MGWPCS permit action (DEQ, 2026). All activities currently take place within the defined property boundaries of an existing industrial site. **No impact.**

Cumulative Impacts

Secondary impacts are not expected with this permitting action after an in-depth review of the Application, Research, and other Government Agency References in development of the Tentative Determination documents for the current MGWPCS permit action (DEQ, 2026). All activities currently take place within the defined property boundaries of an existing industrial site. **No impact.**

2.4 Vegetation Cover, Quantity, and Quality

This section includes the following resource areas, as required in ARM 17.4.609: Vegetation Cover, Quantity and Quality.

Will any vegetative communities be significantly impacted? Are any rare plants or cover types present?

Based on a search of the Natural Heritage Database, there are no plant species listed as either S1 (at high risk), S2 (at risk), LE (listed endangered), or LT (listed threatened) within the immediate vicinity of the

proposed facility. (<http://fieldguide.mt.gov/statusCodes.aspx#msrc:rank>).

The Natural Heritage site report map of the species is provided below. The orange area in the center of the map represents the location of the proposed facility site.

Direct Impacts

No significant impacts were identified by DEQ after an in-depth review of the Application, Research, and other Government Agency References in development of the Tentative Determination documents for the current MGWPCS permit action (DEQ, 2026). All activities currently take place within the defined property boundaries of an existing industrial site. **No impact.**

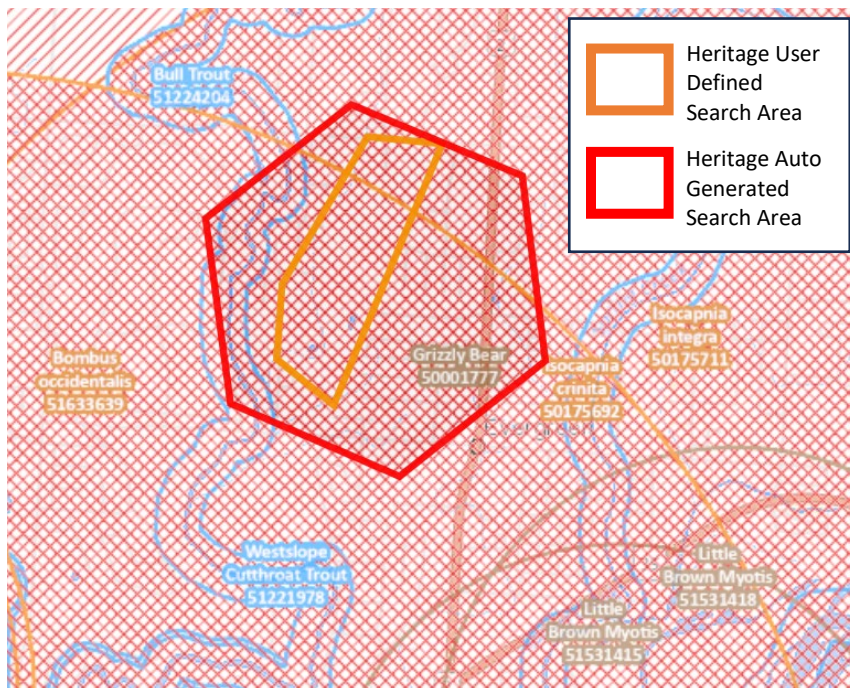
Secondary Impacts

Secondary impacts are not expected with this permitting action after an in-depth review of the Application, Research, and other Government Agency References in development of the Tentative Determination documents for the current MGWPCS permit action (DEQ, 2026). All activities currently take place within the defined property boundaries of an existing industrial site. **No impact.**

Cumulative Impacts

Secondary impacts are not expected with this permitting action after an in-depth review of the Application, Research, and other Government Agency References in development of the Tentative Determination documents for the current MGWPCS permit action (DEQ, 2026). All activities currently take place within the defined property boundaries of an existing industrial site. **No impact.**

Figure 2: Natural Heritage Site Report Map



2.5 Terrestrial, Avian, and Aquatic Life and Habitats

This section includes the following resource areas, as required in ARM 17.4.609: Terrestrial and Aquatic Life and Habitats; Unique, Endangered, Fragile, or Limited Environmental Resources

Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds, or fish? Are any federally listed threatened or endangered species or identified habitat present? Any wetlands? Species of special concern? Impacts related to the Montana Sage Grouse Executive Order?

Based on a search of the Natural Heritage Database, there are seven animal species listed as either S1 (at high risk), S2 (at risk), LE (listed endangered), or LT (listed threatened) in the immediate vicinity of the proposed facility. (<http://fieldguide.mt.gov/statusCodes.aspx#msrc:rank>). The species of concern is listed as the following:

- Grizzly Bear (*Ursus arctos*) is listed as LT regionally within their general habitat.
- Little Brown Myotis (*Myotis lucifugus*) is listed as S2 with the closest observation shown as 1.9 miles to the Southeast of the project area.
- Bull Trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*) is listed as S2 and LT, located in the Whitefish River approximately 3,900 feet downgradient (South) of the facility.
- Westslope Cutthroat Trout (*Oncorhynchus lewisi*) is listed as S2 and located in the Whitefish River approximately 3,900 feet downgradient (South) of the facility.
- Western Bumble Bee (*Bombus occidentalis*) is listed as S2 with a confirmed breeding area last observed in 2025. The observation is located 2.0 miles to the West of the project area.
- Monarch (*Danaus Plexippus*) is listed as S2 with a confirmed breeding area last observed in 2025. The observation is located 2.3 miles to the Southwest of the project area.
- Hooked Snowfly (*Isocapnia crinita*) is listed as S2 with a confirmed breeding area last observed in 1996. The observation is located 1.7 miles to the Southeast of the project area.

The project site is not listed as being located within sage grouse habitat. DEQ referred to the Habitat and Occurrence mapping program at <https://sagegrouse.mt.gov/projects/>. If there are questions about Sage Grouse at this site, the Applicant must contact and consult with the Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program at: <https://sagegrouse.mt.gov/>.

All discharge disposal structures must meet the minimum set back requirements which include surface water, flood plains, ditches and springs. The Applicant is encouraged to contact and consult with the Public Water, Subdivision and State Revolving Fund programs at DEQ: <http://deq.mt.gov/Water/SurfaceWater/DesignApprovals>

Site and habitat inventories for the applicable species were recommended in consultation with the Montana Natural Heritage Program. The Applicant is encouraged to contact and consult with this program or other Natural Resource Information Programs available at the Montana State Library: <http://nris.msl.mt.gov/>

Direct Impacts

No significant impacts were identified by DEQ after an in-depth review of the Application, Research, and other Government Agency References in development of the Tentative Determination documents for the current MGWPCS permit action (DEQ, 2026). All activities currently take place within the defined property boundaries of an existing industrial site.

Negligible impact.

Secondary Impacts

Secondary impacts are not expected with this permitting action after an in-depth review of the Application, Research, and other Government Agency References in development of the Tentative Determination documents for the current MGWPCS permit action (DEQ, 2026). All activities currently take place within the defined property boundaries of an existing industrial site. **Negligible impact.**

Cumulative Impacts

Secondary impacts are not expected with this permitting action after an in-depth review of the Application, Research, and other Government Agency References in development of the Tentative Determination documents for the current MGWPCS permit action (DEQ, 2026). All activities currently take place within the defined property boundaries of an existing industrial site. **Negligible impact.**

2.6 History, Culture, and Archaeological Uniqueness

This section includes the following resource areas, as required in ARM 17.4.609: Historical and Archaeological Sites; Cultural Uniqueness and Diversity

Are there any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present? Will the action cause a shift in some unique quality of the area?

It is not anticipated that this project would cause a shift in any unique quality of the area. A general recommendation by the Montana State Historic Preservation Office (MSHPO) states that in the event that cultural materials are inadvertently discovered, the Applicant should contact the MSHPO office for investigation.

Direct Impacts

DEQ accessed the Montana Cultural Resource Database on 04/13/2026. There are historical sites located near the facility area. No additional disturbance is planned for the existing facility.

No significant impacts were identified by DEQ after an in-depth review of the Application, Research, and other Government Agency References in development of the Tentative Determination documents for the current MGWPCS permit action (DEQ, 2026). All activities currently take place within the defined property boundaries of an existing industrial site. **No impact.**

Secondary Impacts

Secondary impacts are not expected with this permitting action after an in-depth review of the Application, Research, and other Government Agency References in development of the Tentative Determination documents for the current MGWPCS permit action (DEQ, 2026). All activities currently take place within the defined property boundaries of an existing industrial site. **No impact.**

Cumulative Impacts

Secondary impacts are not expected with this permitting action after an in-depth review of the Application, Research, and other Government Agency References in development of the Tentative Determination documents for the current MGWPCS permit action (DEQ, 2026). All

activities currently take place within the defined property boundaries of an existing industrial site. **No impact.**

2.7 Demands on Environmental Resources of Land, Water, Air, or Energy

This section includes the following resource areas, as required in ARM 17.4.609: Demands on Environmental Resources of Land, Water, Air, or Energy

Will the project use resources that are limited in the area? Are there other activities nearby that will affect the project? Are there other activities nearby that will affect the project?

The water supply for the existing facility is currently sourced from the Evergreen Water District. Expansion of the existing facility's footprint is not proposed. The Permittee has a Montana Air Quality Permit, #2602-14, last issued on 01/05/2026. The permit covers all existing sources of air contaminants at the facility. DEQ is unaware of any future expansion or major modifications to the facility that will require an increase of environmental resources.

Direct Impacts

No significant impacts were identified by DEQ after an in-depth review of the Application, Research, and other Government Agency References in development of the Tentative Determination documents for the current MGWPCS permit action (DEQ, 2026). All activities currently take place within the defined property boundaries of an existing industrial site. **No impact.**

Secondary Impacts

Secondary impacts are not expected with this permitting action after an in-depth review of the Application, Research, and other Government Agency References in development of the Tentative Determination documents for the current MGWPCS permit action (DEQ, 2026). All activities currently take place within the defined property boundaries of an existing industrial site. **No impact.**

Cumulative Impacts

Secondary impacts are not expected with this permitting action after an in-depth review of the Application, Research, and other Government Agency References in development of the Tentative Determination documents for the current MGWPCS permit action (DEQ, 2026). All activities currently take place within the defined property boundaries of an existing industrial site. **No impact.**

2.8 Human Health and Safety

Will this project add to health and safety risks in the area?

The Applicant is required to adhere to all applicable state and federal safety laws. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has developed rules and guidelines to reduce the risks associated with this type of labor.

Direct Impacts

No significant impacts were identified by DEQ after an in-depth review of the Application, Research, and other Government Agency References in development of the Tentative Determination documents for the current MGWPCS permit action (DEQ, 2026). All activities

currently take place within the defined property boundaries of an existing industrial site. **No impact.**

Secondary Impacts

Secondary impacts are not expected with this permitting action after an in-depth review of the Application, Research, and other Government Agency References in development of the Tentative Determination documents for the current MGWPCS permit action (DEQ, 2026). All activities currently take place within the defined property boundaries of an existing industrial site. **No impact.**

Cumulative Impacts

Secondary impacts are not expected with this permitting action after an in-depth review of the Application, Research, and other Government Agency References in development of the Tentative Determination documents for the current MGWPCS permit action (DEQ, 2026). All activities currently take place within the defined property boundaries of an existing industrial site. **No impact.**

2.9 Socioeconomics

This section includes the following resource areas, as required in ARM 17.4.609: Social Structures and Mores; Access to and Quality of Recreational and Wilderness Activities; Local and State Tax Base and Tax Revenues; Agricultural or Industrial Production; Quantity and Distribution of Employment; Distribution and Density of Population and Housing; Demands for Government Services; Industrial and Commercial Activity; Locally Adopted Environmental Plans and Goals; Other Appropriate Social and Economic Circumstances

Will the project add to or alter industrial or agricultural activities? Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number. Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue? Will substantial traffic be added to existing roads? Will other services (fire protection, police, schools, etc.) be needed? Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect? Are wilderness or recreational areas nearby or accessed through this tract? Is there recreational potential within the tract? Will the project add to the population and require additional housing? Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities possible?

The project would occur on private land. The area (Evergreen) has a population of 9,200 residents. The existing facility is to be maintained long-term and will have negligible impacts to the population. The project area would be subject to any plans or rules set forth by the local and Flathead County governments. The facility is located on existing disturbed land used for industrial purposes since the 1960's. The operation and maintenance of the wastewater and monitoring systems may also result in permanent jobs. The MGWPCS permit conditions, along with ongoing monitoring and reporting are a vital tool in protection of public and environmental health. It is not anticipated that this project would disrupt native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

Direct Impacts

No significant impacts were identified by DEQ after an in-depth review of the Application, Research, and other Government Agency References in development of the Tentative Determination documents for the current MGWPCS permit action (DEQ, 2026). All activities currently take place within the defined property boundaries of an existing industrial site. **No impact.**

Secondary Impacts

Secondary impacts are not expected with this permitting action after an in-depth review of the Application, Research, and other Government Agency References in development of the Tentative Determination documents for the current MGWPCS permit action (DEQ, 2026). All activities currently take place within the defined property boundaries of an existing industrial site. **No impact.**

Cumulative Impacts

Secondary impacts are not expected with this permitting action after an in-depth review of the Application, Research, and other Government Agency References in development of the Tentative Determination documents for the current MGWPCS permit action (DEQ, 2026). All activities currently take place within the defined property boundaries of an existing industrial site. **No impact.**

2.10 Private Property Impacts

Are we regulating the use of private property under a regulatory statute adopted pursuant to the police power of the state? (Property management, grants of financial assistance, and the exercise of the power of eminent domain are not within this category). If not, no further analysis is required. Does the proposed regulatory action restrict the use of the regulated person's private property? If not, no further analysis is required. Does the agency have Legal discretion to impose or not impose the proposed restriction or discretion as to how the restriction will be imposed? If not, no further analysis is required. If so, the agency must determine if there are alternatives that would reduce, minimize or eliminate the restriction on the use of private property, and analyze such alternative.

The proposed project would take place on private land owned by the Applicant. DEQ's approval of the MGWPCS permit would affect the Applicant's real property. DEQ has determined, however, that the permit conditions are reasonably necessary to ensure compliance with applicable requirements under the Water Quality Act. Therefore, DEQ's approval of the MGWPCS permit would not have private property-taking or damaging implications.

Direct Impacts

No significant impacts were identified by DEQ after an in-depth review of the Application, Research, and other Government Agency References in development of the Tentative Determination documents for the current MGWPCS permit action (DEQ, 2026). All activities currently take place within the defined property boundaries of an existing industrial site. **No impact.**

Secondary Impacts

Secondary impacts are not expected with this permitting action after an in-depth review of the Application, Research, and other Government Agency References in development of the Tentative Determination documents for the current MGWPCS permit action (DEQ, 2026). All activities currently take place within the defined property boundaries of an existing industrial site. **No impact.**

Cumulative Impacts

Secondary impacts are not expected with this permitting action after an in-depth review of the Application, Research, and other Government Agency References in development of the

Tentative Determination documents for the current MGWPCS permit action (DEQ, 2026). All activities currently take place within the defined property boundaries of an existing industrial site. **No impact.**

2.11 Greenhouse Gas Assessment

DEQ has determined the proposed action of issuing a MGWPCS permit for this existing facility would not have a substantive change to the greenhouse gas composition of the Montana environment. Due to the marginal amount of greenhouse gas emissions produced by the Proposed Action, DEQ has used its discretion as allowed by Section 1 of Senate Bill 221, passed in Legislative Session 2025, to forego further analysis for this resource area.

For the purpose of this analysis, DEQ has defined greenhouse gas emissions as the following gas species: carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), nitrous oxide (N₂O), and many species of fluorinated compounds. The range of fluorinated compounds includes numerous chemicals which are used in many household and industrial products. Other pollutants can have some properties that also are similar to those mentioned above, but the EPA has clearly identified the species above as the primary GHGs. Water vapor is also technically a greenhouse gas, but its properties are controlled by the temperature and pressure within the atmosphere, and it is not considered an anthropogenic species.

The Permittee has a Montana Air Quality Permit, #2602-14, last issued on 01/05/2026.

Direct Impacts

No significant impacts were identified by DEQ after an in-depth review of the Application, Research, and other Government Agency References in development of the Tentative Determination documents for the current MGWPCS permit action (DEQ, 2026). All activities currently take place within the defined property boundaries of an existing industrial site. **Negligible impact.**

Secondary Impacts

Secondary impacts are not expected with this permitting action after an in-depth review of the Application, Research, and other Government Agency References in development of the Tentative Determination documents for the current MGWPCS permit action (DEQ, 2026). All activities currently take place within the defined property boundaries of an existing industrial site. **No impact.**

Cumulative Impacts

Secondary impacts are not expected with this permitting action after an in-depth review of the Application, Research, and other Government Agency References in development of the Tentative Determination documents for the current MGWPCS permit action (DEQ, 2026). All activities currently take place within the defined property boundaries of an existing industrial site. **No impact.**

3 DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVES

No Action Alternative: In addition to the proposed action, DEQ must also consider a "no action" alternative. The "no action" alternative would be the denial of the MGWPCS permit. As it is for an existing facility, no permit may result in continued industrial activities without the protection or benefit that occurs with permit coverage under the MT Water Quality Act. This may result in no publicly available monitoring data or reporting that come with permit coverage. The no action alternative may result in the continuance of all existing industrial activities.

If the Applicant demonstrates compliance with all applicable rules and regulations required for approval, the "no action" alternative would not be appropriate.

Other Reasonable Alternative(s): None.

4 CONSULTATION

DEQ engaged in internal and external efforts to identify substantive issues and/or concerns related to the proposed project. Internal scoping consisted of internal review of the environmental assessment document by DEQ staff. External scoping efforts also included queries with the Applicant's application materials and the following websites:

- U.S. EPA Center for Corporate Climate Leadership, Scopes 1, 2 and 3 Emissions Inventorying and Guidance
- Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology
- Montana Natural Heritage Program
- Montana Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program
- Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Geological Survey

5 SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND NEED FOR FURTHER ANALYSIS

When determining whether the preparation of an environmental impact statement is needed, DEQ is required to consider the seven significance criteria set forth in ARM 17.4.608, which are as follows:

- The severity, duration, geographic extent, and frequency of the occurrence of the impact;
- The probability that the impact will occur if the proposed action occurs; or conversely, reasonable assurance in keeping with the potential severity of an impact that the impact will not occur;
- Growth-inducing or growth-inhibiting aspects of the impact, including the relationship or contribution of the impact to cumulative impacts;
- The quantity and quality of each environmental resource or value that would be affected, including the uniqueness and fragility of those resources and values;
- The importance to the state and to society of each environmental resource or value that would be affected;
- Any precedent that would be set as a result of an impact of the proposed action that would commit the department to future actions with significant impacts or a decision in principle about such future actions; and
- Potential conflict with local, state, or federal laws, requirements, or formal plans.

6 CONCLUSIONS AND FINDINGS

Impacts were assessed with the assumption that the facility will comply with the terms and conditions of the permit. Violations of the permit could lead to significant adverse impacts to state waters. Violations of the permit are not an effect of the agency action since the permit itself forbids such activities. However, the Department has taken steps to ensure that violations do not occur. The Department provides technical assistance to Permittees for operation and maintenance, and also in understanding and implementing the requirements of the permit. The Department also conducts periodic inspections of permitted facilities, and identifies potential problems with design or management practices. If violations of the permit do occur, the Department will take appropriate action under the Montana Water Quality Act. Enforcement sanctions for violations of the permit include injunctions, civil and administrative penalties, and cleanup orders.

The preferred action is to issue the new individual MGWPCS discharge permit. This action is preferred because the permit provides a regulatory mechanism for protecting ground water quality by applying wastewater limits and monitoring requirements to the discharged wastewater.

An EIS is not required under MEPA because the project lacks significant adverse effects to the human and physical environment based on above listed criteria.

As described above, DEQ's decision to issue MGWPCS Permit No. MTX000325 authorizes discharge of water to Class I ground water. The discharge is subject to permit conditions that would protect beneficial uses and prevent significant changes in water quality. Environmental impacts resulting from issuance of the MGWPCS permit are localized and would be managed through permit conditions. At the time of this analysis, there are no known conflicts with local, state, or federal laws, requirements, or plans.

7 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Legal notice information for water quality discharge permits is listed at the following website: <http://deq.mt.gov/Public/notices/wgnotices>. Public comments on this proposal are invited any time prior to close of business on **June 25, 2026**. Comments may be directed to DEQWPBPublicComments@mt.gov or to

Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Water Protection Bureau
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620

All comments received or postmarked prior to the close of the public comment period will be considered in the formulation of the final permit. DEQ will respond to all substantive comments pertinent to this permitting action and may issue a final decision within thirty days of the close of the public comment period.

All persons, including the applicant, who believe any condition of the draft permit is inappropriate, or that DEQ's tentative decision to deny an application, terminate a permit, or prepare a draft permit is inappropriate, shall raise all reasonably ascertainable issues and submit all reasonably available arguments supporting their position by the close of the public comment period (including any public hearing). All public comments received for this draft permit will be included in the administrative record and will be available for public viewing during normal business hours.

Copies of the public notice are mailed to the applicant, state and federal agencies, and interested persons who have expressed interest in being notified of permit actions. A copy of the distribution list is available in the administrative record for this draft permit. Electronic copies of the public notice, draft permit, fact sheet, and draft environmental assessment are available at the following website: <http://deq.mt.gov/Public/notices/wgnotices>.

Any person interested in being placed on the mailing list for information regarding this permit may contact the DEQ Water Protection Bureau at (406) 444-5546 or email DEQWPBPublicComments@mt.gov. All inquiries will need to reference the permit number (MTX000325), and include the following information: name, address, and phone number.

During the public comment period provided by the notice, DEQ will accept requests for a public hearing. A request for a public hearing must be in writing and must state the nature of the issue proposed to be raised in the hearing.

8 PREPARATION

Environmental Assessment and Significance Determination Prepared By:

Chris Boe, Water Quality Permit Writer

Environmental Assessment Reviewed By:

Erik Englebert, Supervisor
Tatiana Davila, Bureau Chief

Approved By:

Draft

Tatiana Davila, Bureau Chief
Department of Environmental Quality

Date

9 REFERENCES

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- Subchapter 2 - Water Quality Permit Fees.
- Subchapter 5 – Mixing Zones in Surface and Ground Water.
- Subchapter 7 – Nondegradation of Water Quality.
- Subchapter 10 – Montana Ground Water Pollution Control System.
- Subchapter 13 – Montana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System.

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- Circular DEQ-4 – Montana Standards for On-Site Subsurface Sewage Treatment Systems.
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